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SHOCK ILLUSTRATED

No. 1 Oct. 25¢

Adult Psychoanalytical Tales

IN THIS ISSUE:

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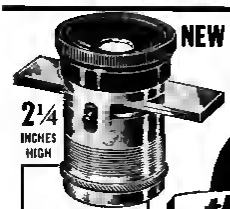

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October 1955

SHOCK ILLUSTRATED

No. 1

"SHOCK Illustrated" is the first of a new series of magazines to present a novel and revolutionary development in the art of story-telling. We at E.C. call this new form of adult entertainment "Picto-Fiction." *Picto-Fiction* is a careful combination of two arts: the art of writing, and the art of illustration.

We deliberately label *Picto-Fiction* "adult" entertainment because it is designed for exactly that purpose . . . to entertain the more mature fiction reader.

In "SHOCK Illustrated," *Picto-Fiction* enters the world of psychiatry, brings to the adult reader fictionalized studies of people with psychological problems, and shows how these people solve their problems with the aid of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. A look at the table of contents below will give you an idea of the adult subject matter of our stories.

In future issues, we will include a "Reader's Page," made up of letters commenting on the mag. We invite mail. The address is:

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New York 12, N. Y.

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CIRCULATION MGR.
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IN THIS ISSUE

Shock, September October, Vol 1, No 1 Published Bi-Monthly by Entertaining Creations, Inc, at 225 Lafayette Street, New York 12, N Y Application as second class matter pending at the Post Office, New York, N Y Subscription, 8 issues for $2 00 in the U S Elsewhere, $2 50

THE NEEDLE

They took Peggy Blaine down to the Police Station, and they booked her on charges of theft, possession of narcotics, and prostitution. The man who'd been picked up with her at the hotel was still under the influence of the drug she'd slipped into his drink.

They'd been watching for Peggy for some time. They'd had previous complaints by men who'd been slipped knock-out drops before they were robbed of their money and rings. The detectives had seen this beautiful girl in the spike-heels pick up her victim on Eighth Street, go with him to a bar, and later to a hotel. They'd arrested her before she could get out of the room. In her purse, they'd found the guy's watch, his money, and all of the evidence they needed.

It was hard for the detectives to believe that this girl was only sixteen years old.

Peggy Blaine sat on a bench, with a grim-faced matron standing over her, waiting for her parents to come down. She was sobbing and trembling, ashamed of what her mother and father would think and feel and say when they learned the truth about their daughter.

She'd left the house less than four hours ago. To go with Joe to a movie, she'd said. It was always the same lie. Going to the movies. She rocked back and forth, shuddering and rolling her neck. If only the cops hadn't taken away her hypo. If they'd only let her have just one shot, she could face anything. But she'd heard how it was when a "junkie" was picked up. They sent you away for a cure. But not until you spent days . . . weeks . . . waiting for your case to come up. And during that time, you couldn't get any heroin. So you clawed the walls of your cell during the night. And you wept. And you stared at the cold bars, waiting for dreams that would never come.

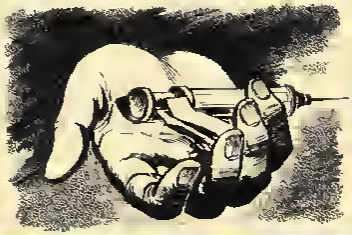
An hour passed before her mother and father arrived. She looked away from their unbelieving stare. Not her mother's eyes! She couldn't take that! Her mother sank down beside her on the bench and took her into her arms, rocking her back and forth . . .

. . . as she sobbed, "It's not true! Lies . . . all lies! You're a good girl. You wouldn't do things like they say you did." Her father looked at the desk sergeant, as if hoping his wife's words would be confirmed

The sergeant shook his head. "I know it's not an easy thing to take, Mr. Blaine, a businessman of your position. But this isn't your daughter's first offense. She's only a kid, sure, but we've had four complaints from men she's picked up and rolled. We watched her pick up this latest guy. When we raided the room, she had his dough and stuff, ready to beat it, and he was out like a light."

"But, why?" whispered Mr. Blaine. "Why? I don't understand. We're not poor. She had everything she needed . . ."

"I see dozens of 'em brought in here every week," said the Sergeant. "It's not a new story. We found this in her bag along with the loot." He held up the hypodermic syringe and the two packages of white powder.



The Sergeant continued, grimly, "I guess maybe you didn't know it, but this is what she needs dough for. She's in pretty deep from the looks of her, Mr. Blaine. She's a heroin addict, and I can tell you there isn't anything worse."

A moan came from the bench. Peggy was rubbing her hands together. Despite her mother's attempts to soothe her, she was scraping her fingernails into the flesh of her arms. Deep sobs from within caused her body to twitch convulsively.

"Now the real trouble begins," the Sergeant muttered.

"She's getting worked up now. That's what happens when they need a 'booster,' a fresh shot," said the Sergeant coldly. "She's cheated and stolen and prostituted herself for money to buy a few grains of the stuff. She's let herself become a slave to something she'll never understand."

At this point, an officer brought in the man who'd been with Peggy in the hotel room. He'd been revived from his stupor and he looked haggard and sullen. When he saw Peggy, his face flushed red. "You lousy brat," he snarled. "A stinkin' sixteen-year old! I pay you and then you try to rob me and get me all loused up in a deal like this! You dirty little . . ."

He cursed the girl and spat at her. Then he pulled out of the officer's grasp and whipped his hand across her face before they could stop him.

The white marks of his fingers on her cheek turned bright red. She stared at him, absorbed in the look of hate in his eyes. Then, the strength went out of her legs, her body went limp, and she collapsed in her mother's arms.

When Peggy regained consciousness, she was in the hospital. She'd been in a coma for three days. Considering her age and the seriousness of her condition (along with the lack of proper city facilities for Juvenile Delinquents), she was given a suspended sentence and placed in the custody of her parents. She was ordered by the court to be sent to a private hospital and immediately given the *cure*.

During the next few months, Peggy was systematically deprived of the drug that her body had come to demand. There were days and nights of agony that no child should have ever suffered. There were nightmares and deliriums that made her want to die. Her life was ended, she thought. Surely this must be death and purgatory.

In the meantime, her parents prepared for the time she would come out of the hospital. They moved to another part of the city, where no one would know them, where no accusing back-fence gossips would point their sharp noses in the direction of the wayward girl. Over and over they practiced how they would act when she returned.

They would be calm. They would ask no questions. There would be no recriminations. It all had to be done without making her feel unwanted or self-conscious. Never must she be allowed to feel they were ashamed of her.

But Peggy's father felt that the *cure* would not be able to do the job fully and completely. He decided, therefore, that the wisest and best thing he could do would be to have Peggy see a psychiatrist. Mrs. Blaine agreed. The problem of Peggy's drug addiction and consequent behavior would not be solved by any *cure*. There were questions that had to be answered. Questions of WHY? Peggy would have to make a complete mental recovery as well as a physical one.

Then Peggy came home. The experience left its mark on her face. Normally bright eyes held a haunted look. She wore no makeup. She never smiled. Her time was spent alone in her room, reading or listening to records or just staring out of the window at the sky.

When her father told her about his plan for her to see a Psychoanalyst, Peggy did not protest. Her agreement was without enthusiasm, without hope. She had long since made a secret decision that when she got the courage, she would end her life.

On a Monday evening at a quarter to seven, Ben Blaine drove his daughter to the apartment building where the psychiatrist maintained his office. As they entered, Peggy suddenly gripped her father's hand tightly. "I'm afraid," she stammered.

"There's nothing to be afraid of, dear," her father answered, reassuringly. "He's not going to do anything but talk to you and listen when you talk. I saw him last week. I told him everything about . . . about what happened."

"How can I face him? I'm so ashamed," she said.

"It's the only way, Peggy. We've got to find out what drove you to do what you did. Otherwise . . ."

"Otherwise I might do it again. Is that it? Is that what you're afraid of?"

"No, no, Peggy. Just relax. No one is going to hurt you, or make you do anything. The doctor told me this will be what they call a 'trial analysis'. If, after a month, he doesn't think you can work with him, or if you think he isn't the person you feel you can trust, then it will end."

But Peggy wasn't hearing her father's words. Panic had taken hold and she was thinking over and over. *I'll never be able to go through with it. I'm too bad. I'm too weak.*

The door to the inner office opened and the doctor came out. She didn't know what she expected him to be like. For the past few nights, since they'd told her, she'd visualized a gaunt-faced man with deep sunken eyes and a black beard. He was clean shaven with a kindly face that made her think of a tailor.

He didn't look like someone who would be able to probe deep into her mind and find out her secrets. As he ushered her into the consultation room, she had an impulse to run. Thinking of her father, she swallowed hard and followed.

She kept saying over and over again in her mind: *He can't make me do anything I don't WANT to. I won't let him. I won't.*

The psychiatrist took his seat behind the desk and smiled at her. "Now, Miss Blaine, there are a few things we have to understand before we can begin . . ."

She half-heard him, as in a dream. She looked at the couch. It wasn't a black leather one like she'd seen in the movies and cartoons. It was modernistic . . . fabric-covered foam rubber. *Will he make me lie down on it,* she thought. *How do I know he won't try something when I'm lying down? That would be funny.* She imagined him clumsily trying to make love to her.

The thoughts ran through her mind in rapid, unconnected order. The she realized he was still talking to her.

". . . so, you see, it's not I who will do anything to you. I am not going to judge your actions or your thoughts. Analysis is a matter of *doing* what you want to do, *saying* what you want to say, right here in this room. You'll do the talking and I'll do the listening. It will be a long, painful process. There'll be times when you'll suffer . . . not necessarily here, but on the outside, after the sessions. You'll want to beat your head against a wall . . . perhaps even want to kill yourself. But, in the end, it will be worth it."

Peggy noticed that her right arm was twitching, just at the elbow, and she watched in fascination. She liked his voice. It was soft, and he looked at her in a kindly way.

". . . no one can go through all this," he was saying, "unless down deep, she really wants to get well. It's a painful way of growing up. It's a way of becoming strong by understanding yourself. I can't make you want to do it, and your mother and father can't make you want it. The decision is yours."

"You can save your parents' money and your own pride by leaving now. Or you can stay and learn what makes you do the things you do. You can learn why. You can learn your own secrets."

She stared at him, interested now. He was actually trying to discourage her. He was saying that if she wanted, she could walk out now and forget the whole thing. Or was he trying to confuse her? Trick her? She thought of her father, as he'd brought her there that evening. She thought of her mother. She recalled the expressions on their faces that evening in the Police Station. Could she really learn why she behaved in funny ways? Why had she fainted that night when the man slapped her? Why was her arm twitching now? Were there really secrets that her own mind kept from her? Could she learn these secrets? How strange. She heard herself say,

"I'll stay."

"It won't be easy," he smiled.

"It wasn't easy when they gave me the *cure* at the hospital. It wasn't easy to be a prostitute," she answered.

"All right." He rose, pushing his chair back from the desk. "Maybe you will have the strength to go through with it. We'll give it a try. Would you like to lie on the couch . . . ?"

It took many sessions just to learn to relax. She would come in, take her place on the couch, and close her eyes. He would pull up his chair and sit, out of sight, behind her. She would hear him lighting his pipe, or smoking it. She would listen for his breathing. And she would talk.

For the first weeks, her talking was nothing more than explaining about herself. She told him how she loved to paint, and how she'd once won a prize for a poster in a contest. She liked Strauss waltzes. But, most of all, she liked the popular music they played at school dances. Then, when she was able to relax, when she trusted him more, she told him how she'd started on the heroin habit. She was fourteen when it all began . . .

She'd never had a steady boyfriend before. When Joey, the tall boy with the red hair and the cleft in his chin began paying attention to her, she was overwhelmed. She knew that she blushed whenever he caught her eye and winked at her. Yet, in English class, she'd turn her head and study his profile.

Joey looked a little like her brother, Eddie, but he was much handsomer. And all the girls in the Freshman Class were mad about him. When he stopped her one day and asked if he could buy her a soda, she didn't know what to say.

Joey was the first one who'd ever bought Peggy anything. Soon after came her first date. She was shy and backward, but Joey was sweet to her. He was the perfect gentleman.

And yet, there was something about Joey that puzzled Peggy. From what she could tell by hearing the other girls talk, he wasn't like the other fellows. He was so moody and quiet at times, she didn't know he was there. Often, he'd get cross and irritable. One day he got so angry, he walked away from her in the street. She didn't understand him, but she knew she was losing him. She was terrified that she couldn't hold on to her first fellow. She was madly in love with Joey.

Then he stopped coming around. Hour after hour she waited for the phone to ring, for a knock at the door, for word from someone that he was waiting to meet her somewhere. The first few days brought her more misery than she'd ever known.

Up in her room, she tried to paint. She picked up her dried-out brushes, softened them, and began to work the soft oils across the canvas. She'd wanted to paint a portrait of Joey . . from memory. But each time she squeezed a tube of orange or red, it made her feel that she was squeezing out her own life blood. What had she done to drive Joey away?

On the third day of Joey's silence, she capped her paint tubes, cleaned out her brushes, packed them neatly back in their box, and put away the canvas she'd begun. There was no sense in wasting her time on this foolish business. She had to go and see for herself, and find out the truth. Joey lived on Tenth Avenue, and when Peggy left her house, she had the feeling that everyone knew where she was going and despised her for it.

"I've got to know if there's another girl," she said to herself. "I won't mind if he's in love with someone else, as long as it isn't something I've done."

There'd been no plan in her mind. She hid in the hallway of an apartment across the street and she waited.

"I shouldn't be doing this," she thought. "It's spying and it isn't right. But I've got to see. I'll go crazy if I don't know." When his front door opened, Peggy held her breath. A deep horror gripped her. He was coming out. She wanted to turn away and not look. But she had to. She had to see.

Joey wasn't dressed up for a date. He was in his dungarees. *Thank God*, she thought. She watched every motion of his walk . . . the way he stood . . . his hands as he lit a cigarette. Her face burned with excitement, and she felt the thrill of spying on him.

He'll be angry if he sees me watching him, she thought. *I'd better sneak away before he catches me.* But when she tried to leave the building, Joey spotted her and came after her.

"Hey, Peggy," he called.

She tried to act as if it were an accidental meeting, but she knew that he suspected why she was there.

"Come on upstairs," he said to her. "My folks aren't home."

"No," she snapped back. "I don't go up to a man's room."

"Aw, come on, Peggy. I'll show you why I haven't been coming around to see you lately."

"I'm sure I hadn't noticed that you weren't coming around," she lied. "You needn't think I'm the least concerned."

"Come on up anyway, Peggy. I want you to know everything."

She went up with him.

She was afraid, and yet she was excited. What was he going to do? She wondered if he'd kiss her while they were alone. Would he try anything else? Would he undress her? She'd heard from some girls in school that fellows did that.

She watched him unlock the door, and she followed him into the darkened room.

She waited. But he didn't kiss her. He didn't touch her. Instead, he went to a drawer and he took out a spoon, a hypodermic needle, and a small package

"What's that?", she whispered. He didn't answer. But when he unfolded the thin package of white powder, she knew. She'd heard about these things at school . . . whispers . . . in hallways, on the stairs, in the lavatories. She drew back.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "Come on and watch."

She saw the eager glow in his eyes as he melted the powder in a spoon over a candle flame. She saw him take the injection. Afterwards, he leaned back and smiled at her.

"You see? This is the reason I haven't been coming around. This is your rival. No one else."

She saw the look in his face, she saw the needle, and before she knew what she was saying, the words came out:

"Give me some too, Joey. I want to do whatever you do. I'm not going to play second fiddle to any little package of white powder. Give me the needle, Joey." And she held out her arm.

"That," said Peggy to the analyst, "was how it began. I was afraid of losing my boy-friend, Joey. I didn't know that I was walking straight into a hell on earth." The analyst handed her a tissue to wipe the tears.

"And that was the beginning of other things," she continued. "There were six of us. We used to pretend to our folks that we were going to the movies. And we'd have wild parties instead. It was wonderful, as long as there was stuff to take. But when I couldn't get out of the house, or if there was no money around, the pain was unbearable. I wanted to kill myself more than once."

"Is that when you began to steal?" came the soft voice from behind her.

"Yes. From stores. From my parents. From the men I picked up on the streets."

* * * * *

As the sessions continued, the conversational tone of each hour changed slowly, imperceptably, under the skillful guidance of the psychoanalyst. From talk and "background," they proceeded to "free-association."

In "free-association," Peggy revealed everything that came into her mind, as disconnected as it might be. Wild memories blended with imagined happenings. An odd tune . . . a half-forgotten book . . . a childhood pal . . . a kiss . . . a dream . . . long, dark corridors . . .

From the long dark corridors of Peggy's past, a pattern slowly began to emerge.

"They never loved me. Not really. Not the way they loved Eddie, my brother. Daddy was hardly ever at home. And if he was, he never paid any attention to me. When I used to greet him as he came in the door, I'd get a pat on the head."

"Mother worked, so she had no time for me. Nobody had any time for me. My brother Eddie never had any time for me either. Always out to get good marks in school."

"Eddie was a real pusher when it came to school work. As far back as I can remember, they were always saying to me: *'Look at Eddie's marks. Why can't you do as well as your brother Eddie does?'* "

"It made me sick. All they ever cared about in that house was Eddie's marks. They didn't care that I got A's in drawing and art. *'Nice,'* Daddy would say, *'but why are you wasting your time on that stuff when you have so much trouble with Algebra?'* "

"Algebra . . . History . . . that's all they thought was important. And I was a failure in those things. I didn't have the power to concentrate like my brother Eddie. I liked to draw and paint, but they made me feel that was kid stuff . . . that only silly girls painted."

"I tried to get better marks in my other work. I tried to study. But it was no use. I just wasn't as smart as Eddie. I just didn't have what my brother had."

Days swept by into months of analysis. The story of Peggy's feelings of inferiority became clearer. She saw how it hurt her to be compared to her brother all the time. "I guess I really hated my brother Eddie," she said, finally, staring at a corner of the wall.

"I thought I admired him and loved him, but when they kept saying how smart he was and how I should try to be like him, I used to run up to my room and cry. I loved him, but I was so ashamed that I couldn't be smart like he was, that I hated him!"

Peggy was amazed at the discovery of her true feelings toward her brother. And other meanings became clear to her as she poured out all her thoughts. They called it free-association, but to Peggy, it was just daydreaming out loud . . . describing everything that came into her mind. The hardest thing for her to learn was that she couldn't choose and select material she would tell. She couldn't censor anything. It was embarrassing at first, but soon, she began to trust her analyst. She soon learned that no matter what she confided in him, he would not judge or condemn her. It was as if he were merely a statue sitting behind her. Only occasionally would he come to life to point out a connection between her thoughts and dreams and experiences.

Sometimes the connections were crystal-clear. Like the time he showed her that her mind considered a hypodermic syringe much like a tube of oil paint.

On that day, when she left the office, she was very much annoyed with him. She wondered if he went out with women, and if he slept with them. She wondered if she could make him fall in love with her. She wondered if she could seduce him.

It recalled to Peggy a story she'd once read called "RAIN," in which a prostitute called Sadie Thompson had been converted from her evil ways by a missionary. But in the end, when they found the missionary dead with his throat cut, Sadie was back to her old ways. Sadie'd shouted, "*You men! You filthy dirty pigs! You're all the same, all of you! Pigs! Pigs!*"

Sadie'd discovered that the missionary who'd pretended to purify her was like all the rest. And Peggy wondered if her analyst would cut his throat if she would seduce him.

And as Peggy walked on home, she was startled to think that tomorrow she would have to reveal all these thoughts to him. How could she tell him these things? What would he say? Would he try something? Would he touch her? As she thought about it, her right arm began to twitch, just above the elbow, as it did often lately when she became emotionally upset.

That night, she was afraid to sleep. She was afraid of the dreams she would have.

When she finally did fall asleep, her dream was a troubled one. She dreamed that she had lured her psychoanalyst to a hotel room. But he'd stood there, resisting all her advances. She'd pushed him into a chair and sat on his lap.

She'd known that people were watching them from the window, through the keyhole. She'd tried to put his hand on her, but he'd fought her off. He'd slapped her as she tried to kiss him.

Then he'd grabbed her right arm and twisted it, throwing her to the floor upon it. She'd lay there, sobbing and crying. And as she'd watched him through her tears, his face had begun to disappear, melting away like wax. It wasn't her analyst anymore. It was Joey . . her boy-friend.

But then Joey's face had melted away, too. And Peggy knew there was another one hidden deep in the wax. Through the soft dripping front, she could see the black sunken orbs, the snarling mouth. She could hear the voice: *You filthy pigs! All the same! Pigs!*

The thing had reached down and gripped her arm with fingers of hot dripping wax that had seared her flesh. And then she'd screamed. In the thing's right hand was a hypodermic needle.

She'd tried to get the needle, but the thing had held it away, taunting her with it. And then, it had slapped her face . . . again and again . . .

When she'd tried to lift herself from the hotel room floor, the thing . . . whoever it was . . . had gone. But she couldn't move. There was no feeling in her right arm. It was paralyzed. She'd screamed . . .

And a light snapped on in her bedroom

"My arm," she shrieked. "I had a horrible nightmare that my arm was paralyzed. But, look! I can't move it. My arm IS paralyzed! IT REALLY HAPPENED!"

Peggy learned from her analyst that her paralyzed arm was not due to anything physical.

"It means we're reaching a critical point in your analysis," he told her.

"We're nearing a delicate area, and your subconscious mind is so terrified we'll touch on the truth that it's erupted into a symptom known as 'hysterical paralysis' in order to divert us from our course. But if you're strong enough to take it, we can turn this symptom to our own use. We can use it as a lever to pry loose the boulder that's blocking our path into your past.

That session, Peggy recounted her dream.

"What does falling on your arm remind you of, Peggy?" the analyst asked. "What do you think of?"

Through half-closed eyes, she saw the dripping wax face of her dream. She tried to penetrate the soggy mask. *Who was it?* she asked herself.

"Arm," she began her associations. "I fell on my arm. Fall. Down. Falling down. Falling." Suddenly she opened her eyes wide.

"Doctor," she gasped. "It was my right arm I fell on. It was my right arm I failed with. It's the arm I used to take the injections in!"

She rubbed her hand over the arm that had felt the sharp prick of the hypodermic needle so many times . . . the arm that had been the source of so much pleasure and pain with Joey . . . the arm that was now completely devoid of feeling.

"It's Joey, my boy-friend," she whispered.

"The face in my dream belongs to Joey. And when he pushes me away in my dream, it's the same as when he stopped seeing me that first time. It was his pushing me away . . . like throwing me down . . . to one side."

Peggy seemed relieved. "You know," she said, "at first it was you, Doctor. In my dream I wanted to seduce you. But it was really Joey, wasn't it? He's the one who made me take the needle in my arm . . . my right arm. That's why it's paralyzed."

She lay there quietly, thinking.

"Who else or what else does Joey remind you of, Peggy?" the analyst asked.

"No one! Nothing!" she snapped back.

"Are you sure?"

She turned and looked at him. "Why?" she asked. "Who do you think it is? Do you think there's someone else, Doctor?"

"It doesn't matter what I think, Peggy. If I said anything, it would be *my* association. The connection in *my* mind."

"We've got to know who *your* mind thinks is the cause of your hysterical paralysis." he answered.

"I don't know, Doctor. I don't know. My mother? My father? I don't know," she almost shouted.

She got to her feet. "I'm tired," she announced. "I feel dizzy. I feel sick. I'm going around in circles I don't want to talk anymore!"

"All right, Peggy," the analyst shrugged. "Your hour is nearly up anyway. That will be all for today."

In the months that followed, progress was slow. The paralyzed arm, the wax-faced figure in the dream, the connection of these to Joey who had initiated Peggy in the mysteries of heroin and sex . . . all came up again in various forms. It was like running through a maze and coming back to a locked door, the same locked door, with light coming through a small keyhole. Somewhere in the corner of her mind, there was a key that would fit that keyhole and unlock that closed door. Somewhere beyond it, there was a link that would make the pattern clear. It would explain why she was the way she was, why she did what she did, why she had nearly destroyed her life.

Then, one night, came another clue . . .

"This morning," she told him, "I wanted to begin a painting. Without thinking, I pulled out my canvas and paint box. Then I realized that it was my paralyzed arm I needed to paint with. So the arm that I injected needles into was also the arm I used for painting."

"And," urged the analyst, "what does painting remind you of?"

"Pictures," Peggy began to free-associate, "... dreams ... faces ... wax faces ... dripping ... Wait! I remember. It was when I was ten years old. I came home from school with a watercolor I'd done ..."

"The teacher had liked it and I'd thought it was beautiful. It was a painting of a boy and a girl. But when I got home to show it to my family, it was smeared. You couldn't see the boy's face at all, and his right arm was just an ugly blotch."

"Daddy said he'd never seen an arm like that and that the face didn't look like anyone he knew. My brother Eddie laughed. They were all laughing at me. I cried and ran up to my room ..."

Peggy stopped talking suddenly and stared at the ceiling. Her heart was beating so loud, she thought surely the doctor must hear it. Her face flushed.

"I feel funny ... I'm blushing, I know ... and there's a funny feeling in my stomach."

"What kind of a feeling?" the analyst asked.

"I don't know," she shrugged. "It's sort of a peculiar feeling ... a sexy feeling ... like I got when I ... like I used to get when I was with a man."

"What does it make you think of?"

"Of crying."

"What else?"

She was silent.

"Is there something you want to tell me? Something you're ashamed of?"

She didn't answer.

"Is it something associated with your paralyzed arm? Something you did with it?"

She stared at the ceiling, coloring.

"All right, Peggy. That will be all for tonight."

She left his office, sobbing.

A week later, Peggy told her analyst that the night of the incident with the smeared water color, she'd gone to her room, wept in her pillow, and then did something to herself that she had never done before in her life. And she associated it with her paralyzed hand.

Peggy had opened one of the many doors of her unconscious. What she'd done to herself that night, she never did again. It had filled her with fear and shame. She'd read or heard somewhere that people who did these things to themselves went insane. Afraid . . . terrified of being found out . . . not knowing how normal her reaction was, she pushed the incident out of her consciousness and blocked it from her memory. It was another clue to her paralysis . . . another link in the chain that had to be forged before she could connect present actions with past causes. But her paralysis had not disappeared with its recall. There was still, then, something else, more horrible which her mind could not accept.

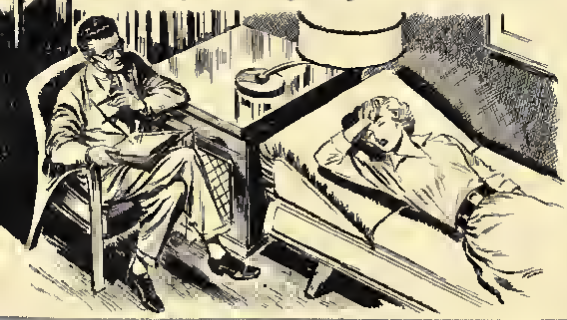
"But, Doctor," she pleaded, "if I can face all these horrible thoughts of mine, why doesn't my arm get better? What else can there be? There can't be anything worse. Nothing I can't face after this."

The analyst puffed on his pipe. His voice soothed her from the shadows behind. "It may not be anything you've *done*, Peggy. It could be something as insignificant as a thought, or something you saw as a child that left an impression all these years."

"Now that you're grown up, it might not be important. But you're still reacting to it as you did when you were a child. It's still important to the child that lives locked up within your mind."

"When will I know it?" she asked.

"When you're strong enough to bear it," he said.



"It wouldn't do you any good to know it before. You wouldn't be ready for it. You might not believe it. When you see it yourself and feel the same emotions you felt then, you'll know it's true. It will come up out of the darkness and be washed away. Then you'll control it. The frightened child within you will no longer dictate your adult behavior."

Peggy rocked her head from side to side. "But I'm so tired, doctor . . . so tired. It's been over a year now. I feel so sick and empty inside. When I'm alone in my room at night, I want to scream and beat my head against the wall."

"I feel that people are staring at me . . . through the window . . . the keyhole. I'm afraid. So afraid. And there are times I wish I could have just one shot of heroin to make me feel good and warm."

In the next few weeks, it seemed as if Peggy's analysis had come to a dead end. There were no new associations . . . only a rehash of the same old things, gone over again and again and again.

She talked and talked. But it was just another method of blocking progress as effective as the periods of dead silence had been earlier.

And she became violently emotional. She would scream and tear her hair. She would claw at her numb right arm. She would shout that she was being kept there as a prisoner . . . against her will.

* * * * *

"You don't like me," she screamed at the analyst one evening. "You know I was a prostitute. You think I'm disgusting."

"Well, I know you!" she continued, raving. "You're like all the rest! Pigs! A bunch of filthy pigs who only want to get their hands on women! Sometimes I wonder what you do here alone in this room when your patients have gone. I *know* what men do *without* women. I *saw* once . . ."

Her voice trailed off in a gasp. Her eyes opened wide. Her face went white. Her breath trembled like a fluttering leaf.

"Go ahead, Peggy," the analyst encouraged her. "Talk! What did you see?"

Everything was going around. The nausea came up from inside, choking, making her tremble as she'd done when they'd taken the drug away from her.

"Talk, Peggy!" he insisted. "Don't hold it back! This may be it! What did you see? Tell me!"

"I was about seven years old," she began. "I remember. It was dark in the house. I can see it so clearly. Mom and Dad had gone out and I was alone in my room. I was afraid of the dark, so I crept out of bed and opened the door."

"There was a light on under the door to my brother Eddie's room. He must have been twelve or thirteen then. I was going to open the door, but it was so quiet, I peeked through the keyhole instead, to see what . . . he . . . was . . . doing . . ."

"What was it, Peggy?" What was he doing?"

She turned her head to the wall. "I feel sick," she said.

"Was he doing something with his hand? His *right hand?* Answer me, Peggy!"

"Yes! Yes!" she screamed. "I saw him. I was terrified and I was fascinated. I watched him through the keyhole. Then, like a stupid fool, I went in. I told him I wanted to play too! Oh, God, I remember. I remember! He jumped up at the sound of my voice. He was so embarrassed, he didn't know what to do. He tried to cover himself so that I wouldn't see anymore. And then he slapped me across the face. He slapped me! I'll never forget the look in his face. A look of hatred. And I hated him too. I hated him. I hated him . . . hated him . . ."

She clutched at the couch, the wall.

"It was the same way I spied on Joey. And then he took me up to his room. He wanted to shut me out the way my brother Eddie shut me out. Because he had something I didn't have. And he didn't need me. But, I wouldn't let him. I wanted what he had. So I took the needle too!"

"I did what Joey did. I had what Joey had . . . oh, God . . . Oh, God . . ."

Everything went round inside her. The nausea came up, choking, making her tremble. She moaned and rocked and wept. She clawed at her eyes as if to tear them out. Before she fainted, she realized dimly that she was using both hands. The paralysis was gone!

The last day of the analysis, Peggy came down to the office with a large painting under her arm. "This is for you," she told the analyst. "I've finished it. I want you to have it."

"Well," he said, hanging it on the wall between the windows. "Quite a handsome portrait. Who is it?"

She looked at it for a while and then shrugged, "I guess it represents all the men in my life. I started out painting Joey, and then, during the analysis, I thought the face would be your face. But it was hard to paint you. I never really saw you clearly, only back there in the shadows. Now I know that you both symbolized the same thing to me: Eddie, my brother, the man I loved and hated, envied and despised all my life.

"That slap he gave me when I spied on him as a child made me hate him so violently, I had to push him out of my mind. I was always jealous of him, because he had everything I didn't have. He had my father's love, he had good-looks, he had brains, and most important to me, he . . ."

". . . well, when I saw him that night through the keyhole, I learned what it was to be only a girl instead of a boy. Eddie was like my father . . . and I knew I could never be like that!"

"I hated him for it," she said.

"And now you know that the hypodermic needle of Joey's came to symbolize, for you, that . . ."

"Yes," she cut him short. "It seems silly now."

"But it wasn't silly to the seven year old girl who controlled your mind. You hated and envied your brother for having something you could never have, and you felt guilty for having those feelings."

"You must have suspected," she smiled. ". . . even though I hardly mentioned my brother . . . that he was the basis of all my anxiety . . . all my guilt."

The psychoanalyst nodded. "I suspected. Mostly because you *didn't* talk about him freely."

"And you knew all the time . . . what happened to him?" she asked, hesitantly.

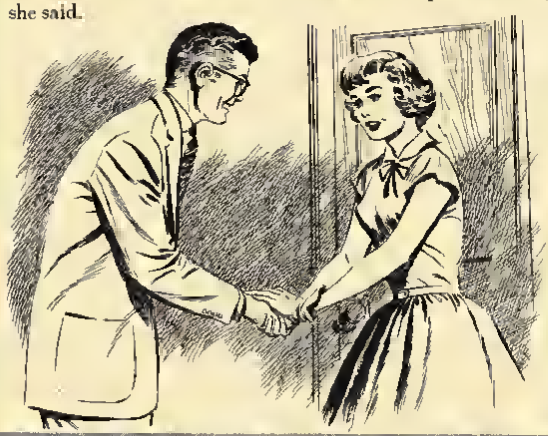
"Your father told me, during our first meeting, that when your brother died, you took it very hard. You probably never believed the war killed him. You must have thought that it was your own death-wishes that made the shrapnel destroy him."

"It was a deep, terrifying guilt to carry, Peggy. The hypodermic became a symbol. You must have thought that by injecting that symbol of maleness into you, you could erase some of that guilt . . . become a boy . . . replace the brother you'd wished dead . . . and at the same time, you'd have that which you'd been deprived of"

"I understand it all now," she said, opening her purse. "I . . . I don't think I'll be needing this any more. It was never used. I carried it with me though, for nearly a year. Knowing now what it means, I don't think I'll be wanting it again."

She took out the hypodermic wrapped in tissue.

She put it on his desk, kissed him on the cheek, and took a last look around the office. "I'll miss this place, doctor," she said.



Then she left.

The analyst looked at the oil painting, then through the curtain. He watched Peggy Blaine come out of the apartment building and walk briskly up the street. He picked up his pen and added one last note to the case-folder. "It's good," he wrote, "to see that healthy kid walk out of this office in place of the sick one who walked in so long ago."

Then, he picked up the rubber stamp, and with it, marked "CASE CLOSED" on the outside of the folder.

Lastly, he picked up the hypodermic and put it back into his desk drawer from which it had been missing for nearly a year.

THE END

SWITCH PARTY

There was an air of unreality about it. George Billings was crawling over the carpet, groping hungrily with fat-fingered blindness for the metal symbol that meant a night with a woman he had no more right to be with than any of the other three men present had the right to be with his own slender wife.

Beth Denbow cringed as George's fingers touched the yellow key she knew was hers *No! Not George!* She could hardly stand to dance with him, let alone go home with him to her dainty, lavender-rugged, lavender-scented room

What was this mad game they were playing? Why did she have to go home with a man just because his groping hand touched her housekey?

Uneasily, Beth's eyes traveled across the room to Alan Kent. Alan had won Beth's key twice before. Neither time had anything "happened." She and Alan had spent the night talking and walking, smoking through two packs of cigarettes, wondering why the world was the way it was, and why they were doing what they were doing. Alan stared back at Beth.

Alan understood her, as her own husband never could, Beth thought. *He knew what the look of panic in her eyes meant.* Beth wanted Alan. Not for the reasons the others had. Beth knew she was safe with Alan. He was the reluctant member of his combination, as she was of hers. They'd been drawn together out of common revulsion for this game the others had thrown themselves into with such gusto.

But, Beth had nothing to fear from George Billings tonight. He'd picked Martha Kent's key.

Till now, Martha, Alan's wife, had enjoyed the company of every man in the clique but George. The cycle was now complete.

"It's like hitting a home run in every ball park," she howled to the spectators.

With her husband gone, Carolyn Billings eagerly tossed her key into the pool. Jane Harroway watched tensely as Tom Harroway grinned and tied the mask around Jim Denbow's face. Jim was laughing, his face flushed with excitement.

"So it's either Jane or Carolyn," Jim laughed. "Well, I'm not complaining."

Beth and Alan exchanged pale looks as he knelt and removed her key from the pool.

Jim came up with Jane Harroway's key. A deep flush reddened Jane's cheeks. She rose stiffly, concealing her excitement and took Jim's arm. For a brief moment, Jim paused in the doorway of the Billings' house. He looked back at Beth.

Puzzlement crept into his eyes.

"B-Beth . . ." he hesitated. A regretful expression flashed across his face. A look of momentary, tortured apology. Then, abruptly, helplessly, he turned away.

The game continued. Beth's key was returned to the pool and Tom Harroway began fumbling near it. Beth caught her breath sharply. *No, it mustn't be Tom. Not bleary-eyed, scotch-soaked, evil-tongued Tom. It must be Alan. Only Alan,* she prayed.

Carolyn squealed. It *was* Alan! Oh, thank God! Impulsively, Beth touched Alan's hand. Tenderly, she pressed it and got up.

"Let's go," she whispered softly.

The night street was quiet. The air was cool and sweet and clean. They walked in silence, breathing in the clean air. Beth's house was a short distance away. Finally, she spoke.

"Why are we in this thing, Alan? There must be a reason!"

Alan nodded. "There's always a reason. Not the same one for everybody, but a reason just the same . . . for *each* of us."

Beth paused on the top step. She looked at him intently.

"What's your reason, Alan?"

He shrugged, examining the key in his hand.

"Martha wants excitement. She despises me as a person. As a man. As a husband. She wants *other* men. I just go along with her moods, her needs. I always have. There's no love between us."

Beth frowned. "Your reason is the same as mine. Weakness. I couldn't say no to Jim. He nagged me about it over and over . . . again and again. A hundred times I refused. Perhaps I should have refused the hundred and first time too. But I didn't."

She switched on the living room lights and walked toward the kitchen.

"I'll make coffee," she said, "And we'll sit and talk."

But they didn't talk. They sat, facing each other, sunk in silence. Finally, Beth leaned back her head and studied him.

"Sorry you're not doing what the others are?"

"You know I'm not," he replied. "A key is no claim on a person."

She eyed him steadily.

"The others seem to think so. Why should we be different?"

Alan stood up gravely. "You're thinking about Jim, aren't you?" he murmured. "Jim with that Jane Harroway. You know what he's doing and there's despair in your heart. You want to blot out everything with me."

"No, Alan," Beth shook her head. "I just feel I've got to cling to something. I've got to find meaning and honesty and love . . ."

Alan stared at her keenly. "And you find those things in me?"

She shrugged, helplessly.

"They've got to be in somebody. They aren't in Jim."

"Again Jim!" Alan smiled wanly. "Don't you see you're still deeply in love with him?"

A baffling rage seized Beth. "I'm not!" she cried. "I hate him! I loath everything he is and does! Alan, the world is cheap and false! We're fools to be honest and noble! Why deny ourselves?"

Alan shook his head. "You're thinking of Jim with Jane. You want to retaliate. Get some sleep, Beth."

He moved toward the door and then he was gone.

Beth stared at the closed door, the empty room around her.

Beth understood the meaning of Alan's rejection. He would not take her as the outgrowth of a switch party affair.

Heartsick and miserable, she curled up in a chair and waited for morning . . . for Jim's return.

About 5 A.M., the door opened. Jim came in, as he had on past occasions, with an uneasy look on his face. He was surprised to see Beth sitting up.

"Why aren't you in bed?" he asked curtly.

"Because *I* haven't *been* to bed!" she answered pointedly. He flushed with guilt.

"Where were you, then?" he sneered. "On the couch?"

Beth glared at him in hatred. "We talked for an hour and then he left."

Jim snorted. "No wonder Martha Kent is the way she is. She's starved. Some friend you picked out for yourself!"

"He's a better friend than you are a husband!" she snapped back grimly. Then she went into the bedroom and took out a pillow and blanket.

Beth slept on the couch that night.

The next day, they didn't talk to one another. Nor the next. They were like two strangers occupying the same house.

Strangely, Beth found herself looking forward to the next party. It meant seeing Alan again.

But she was also afraid . . . terrified of what might happen once the switching got under way.

The following Saturday night, while the others drank determinedly, she and Alan danced together.

"I've missed you," he whispered.

"Then why didn't you call me?" she answered.

"Do you mean that?" he stared at her in surprise. She nodded. Alan said nothing. He just held her close.

As though delirious, she felt hungry lips press against her own.

But it was Beth who'd sought Alan's lips. He'd merely returned the pressure of her mouth. Suddenly the mad mood was shattered into a hundred painful pieces. A rough hand pulled her to one side. Another rough hand pushed her and she went reeling across the room.

Searing pain shot through her shoulder as it collided with the wall. She cried out with shock. Jim was screaming at her . . .

"You cheap tramp. So nothing happened the three times you were with him. That's why you were kissing like that."

Jim towered over her, raging. He raised his fist to strike her again but Alan grabbed it and twisted.

Beth saw everything through a blur of tears and pain. Jim was punching away at Alan. The other men were trying to hold him back.

"You double-crossing two-timing rat!" Jim was sobbing. "Y-You've been seeing her behind my back!"

"No wonder nothing happens on Saturday nights. You've got every day in the week, while I'm away at the office!"

Beth couldn't believe her ears and eyes. She'd seen Jim angry before, but never like this. Never like a lunatic, screaming wild accusations, flailing at everybody as if he'd gone mad.

"It's got to stop, you hear!?" he snarled at Alan. "It's got to stop *now!*"

"There's nothing to stop, Jim," Alan answered quietly.

"You *lie!* You LIE! She's in *love* with you!" Rage overcame Jim again and he leaped at Alan, battering him with his fists. "I'll beat your brains out."

Before anyone could stop him, he sent Alan crashing to the floor.

Suddenly, resentment and fury surged forth in Beth. She leaped at Jim, shrieking . . . clawing . . . biting . . . tearing at his face and body.

"YOU did this! YOU alone! YOU wanted these switch parties! You wanted some fat fool to slobber over me!"

Jim turned white as he tried to beat off her blows. But she was a wild thing, now . . . pouring out all of her hate and loathing . . . unstoppable . . .

"Is *this* what you married me for?" she screamed, whirling on the others, who regarded her in shocked, shamed silence. "To be the prize in a dirty game?! You're *sick! All* of you. Your *minds* are deranged! They *must* be to enjoy this . . . this . . ."

Then she turned to Jim once more. Her eyes were full of disgust and self-guilt and pain.

"I gave in to you like a fool. I let you have your way because I was weary of arguing with you. Well, it's ended now! *Finished!*"

"You've turned our marriage into something dirty. I don't want to see you again!" Her gaze swept loathingly to the others. "*Any* of you!"

She turned swiftly and ran from the house.

Jim stared at the group, dazed. Then, without a word, he followed her.

He found her at home, packing a valise.

"I'm sorry about tonight," he began.

She hardly looked at him.

"I couldn't help it, Beth. When I saw you kiss Kent, something exploded inside me. I couldn't take it. I . ." He stopped talking. Her cold stare paralyzed him.

"You're sick," she said. "Mentally sick. You need help. They *all* need help, but *you* most of all. Go to a psychiatrist! Maybe *he* can help you. Maybe he can straighten out your twisted brain."

Before he could say anything or stop her, she was out the door, in the car, and gone.

That night, Jim Denbow did not sleep. Wretchedly, his mind reviewed the past . . . his past with Beth. Nothing had gone right in their marriage. They'd been like two strangers occupying the same house, each meting out coldness and mental torture to the other, each too proud to concede error. Now, the difference between them had widened into a void. Why? What had been wrong? Was his brain really *twisted* as Beth had said?

He found out the next day that she was living with her mother. She refused to see him or answer his calls. He would hear from her lawyer in due time.

Jim had heard of psychiatry, of course. Some of his friends were under analysis. One night, half-jokingly, secretly in dead earnest, Jim asked Ted Manson about Ted's analysis.

Without going into his motivations or radiating too much curiosity, Jim learned the name of Manson's analyst.

The following day found him in the psychiatrist's office.

The place was much as Jim had imagined it. The foam-rubber couch was there, the drawn blinds, the atmosphere of intense quiet and total privacy.

It was the psychiatrist who surprised him, though why he should have been surprised at all by the analyst's youthfulness (the doctor seemed to be in his late thirties) Jim did not know.

"You expected an older man . . . someone with a goatee or beard . . . looking like Pasteur or Freud?" smiled the doctor, sensing Jim's thoughts.

Jim nodded, amazed. He didn't even have a Viennese accent, nor was his stare hypnotic. He was just another human being . . . a doctor . . . trained in understanding the human mind.

The first few sessions were devoted to Jim's biography . . . to whom he was born . . . where he lived . . . what his childhood and adolescence were like. "I was an unhappy kid," Jim decided.

"Everything at home was sunk in gloom. My mother was an unhappy woman. She was widowed early, and my father had left us practically penniless. There was nothing but struggle and bitterness in our home. Maybe I was wrong but I got the feeling my mother hated us . . my two sisters and myself. As if *we* were the causes of her misfortune. Anyway, my mother ran our house like a tyrant. Nothing pleased her. She kept drumming into our heads the sacrifices she made for us. We couldn't take a step, think a thought, spend a dime without her approval. And we never got approval unless it was for something *she* wanted. It was as if our function, and our function alone, was to make her life justifiable."

Despite the misery of recollection, Jim found himself fascinated by the multitude of things he recalled under the skillful guidance of the psychiatrist. He became again the frightened, lonely boy he'd once been . . . the worried, introspective youth dreaming and living in a world of his own, afraid to share his innermost thoughts with anyone, especially the grim, insulting overseer who cast the shadow of her morbidity over her children.

"I looked forward to manhood, to independence, like a prisoner looks forward to his freedom from imprisonment or a suffering patient looks forward to whatever can relieve his pain," Jim said, as he lay on the couch one day. A frown clouded his features. His eyes filled with tears. His voice choked in his throat. "But it didn't work out the way I'd dreamed. In Beth, I got a younger edition of my own mother."

"Beth fought me right down the line . . . disliking whatever I liked . . . trying to convert me into an intimidated child, not a husband."

Jim's frown deepened. Anger etched lines in his face. "That's why I went into this switch thing, Doctor! It was a way of getting even. I've thought about it often. I . . . I wanted to bring Beth low."

The psychiatrist raised his eyebrows a trifle. "How did you plan to do that?" he asked.

Jim's mouth grew white and tight-lipped. "By forcing indignities on her! By debasing her!"

"I wanted to make her spirit vulgar and tarnished. By forcing her into relations with men like Tom Harroway and George Billings, she'd sink out of sight . . . sexually."

"But she didn't," the psychiatrist reminded him. "She chose, instead, to fall in love with Alan Kent."

Jim winced at the thought of Alan.

As the weeks passed, it became apparent that Beth intended to make the separation a permanent one. Again and again, Jim tried to reach her, but she was unreachable. Beth was somewhere out of town. Her mother refused to tell where.

Despairingly, Jim tried to blame Beth's upbringing for part of the difficulties. Beth had come from a house where the father was a poor provider . . . a failure in business and in life. Nor did Beth's mother ever let him forget it. Beth's father had become the glaring example of all that was unglamorous and disappointing in marriage . . . and *men*. Matrimony, as practiced in Beth's house, seemed cold, loveless, undesirable, and destructive. Under her mother's bitter tutelage, Beth, as the eldest daughter, was instructed to make her own way in the world and not to depend on any man for either income or affection. So belittled and despised was Beth's father, that when he died in a streetcar accident, he was neither missed nor mourned. This distaste for matrimony, Beth had carried into her own marriage. Her suspicion and disdain for all men . . . including Jim . . . persisted through all phases of their life together.

"She was apathetic sexually," Jim muttered. "She never seemed to want me. She refused me more often then not."

"It became a battle to see who ruled the house, she or I. And *neither* of us won."

"What did you do when Beth refused you sexually?" the psychiatrist asked.

"I went out with other women," Jim answered defiantly. "What was I supposed to do? Crawl to her? Beg her? To blazes with that! I had my pride. I proved to myself I could do without her."

"Then why the switch game?" the analyst asked mildly. "You satisfied yourself with other women. What value could Beth's shame have for you? Why did *she* have to participate?"

"I told you," Jim snarled. "I wanted to punish her. Debase her."

"Why does *any* switch party take place? Because everybody's bored to death with the usual routine. You defy convention because standard morals haven't made you happy. When you get right down to it, who *is* happy these days? The switch seems like a good idea, if only because whatever guilt you might feel is shared. You're neither of you guiltless. It's like adultery without a penalty."

"I see," nodded the psychiatrist. "Then why did you become so upset when you thought Beth was falling in love with Alan Kent?"

Jim shrugged. "A switch party is born of lust . . . the search for excitement . . . the escape from monotony . . . *not love!* Beth and Alan were no longer playing the game."

The analyst nodded ironically. "I see. It's all right to indulge one's lust . . . but to fall in *love* with one's temporary switch partner, that's intolerable!"

"That's right," insisted Jim.

"You say you're in love with Beth," the analyst continued. "What about the other men? Billings? Kent? Harroway? Do they love their wives? Would they have reacted as you did . . . with anguish, hurt . . . if they felt their wives drifting away from them? Toward another man? Toward any man?"

"How should I know?" Jim shook his head. "I don't think there's any love whatever between the other couples. How could there be? I mean, knowing . . ."

Jim's voice trailed off into silence.

"Look, Doctor," he said, finally. "I admit I'm the peculiar male in the picture. I love my wife, yet I urged her to have relations with other men."

"To punish her because she doesn't desire you sufficiently," the psychiatrist added shrewdly.

"That's right!" assented Jim. "To punish her! To rub her nose in the dirt!"

"Is this the action of a man in love? To *hurt* what he loves? To dirty it and destroy it?" the analyst wondered out loud. "This objective seems *contrary* to love."

Jim glowered. "What *other* motives would I have?"

"We'll find out," the doctor smiled. "Not from your alert, cautious, anxious mind. But from your dreams . . . the unfettered thinking and yearning that comes from your unconscious mind . . . from the emotions you don't consciously censor!"

At the end of that week, the analyst phoned Beth and found her at home. He explained that Jim was under analysis and gave his assurance that all outward evidences to the contrary, Jim was still deeply in love with her. Did this information matter to her? Beth was hesitant, but honest.

It did matter, but she just couldn't reconcile Jim's alleged love with the switch parties. The doctor pointed out that it was the business of psychoanalysis to explain such enigmas. Would she be interested in standing by to learn the results? Beth answered that she was very much interested.

Jim began telling the doctor about his dreams . . . from early adolescence to the present. One dream kept recurring in many varying patterns from his earliest years. In a typical dream, he had some task to perform . . . a task that always seemed very light and easy to begin with . . . but as he attempted it, it grew heavy and impossible, usually ending in disaster. Like carrying two pails of water up a steep hill and finding, to his horror, that the pails were turning into huge storage tanks that had to be dropped because they were tearing his arms out of their sockets! Whatever it was . . . books he was carrying . . . stones he was rolling . . . some weight that had to be transported from one place to another . . . the light load became incredibly heavy.

In all his dreams, Jim kept seeing one type of geography or topography. Desert areas . . . denuded, treeless, shrubless stretches as far as the eye could see. Dry creeks, dry as mud . . . dust bowls . . . sand storms . . . craggy mountains, bare of vegetation . . . petrified forests. This was the scenic backdrop for as far back as he could remember. Nor could he ever recall a dream involving a woman which ended pleasantly. In every dream involving a female, whether it was his mother, his sisters, or a girl unknown to him, the woman invariably turned from him with mockery and loathing.

"I recall one persistent dream," murmured Jim. "It returned again and again after I married Beth. I would be bringing her something . . . a gift of some kind . . . flowers . . . fruit . . . whatever. And again, it would be in a desert setting . . . or on some craggy, treeless peak And I would be afraid and trembling."

"Somehow, in my heart, I would know that Beth wasn't going to like my gift. And I'd be right. Each time I would offer it to her, she'd examine it and push it away from her, expressing disgust and disappointment."

"These recurrent images of dry, arid areas . . . the dust bowls, deserts, rocky places? What do they suggest to you, Jim?" inquired the analyst.

Jim frowned and shrugged.

"Barrenness?" he suggested.

"What else?" the analyst prodded. "Look at the dream material. A task you can't perform. A task for which you begin to feel inadequate. Women *all* women . . . turning from you in loathing. Your gifts refused and repelled in disgust . . ."

". . . A total phantasmagoria of inadequacy and barrenness. Do you recognize these dream symbols for what they are, Jim?"

Jim shook his head, groaning.

"You're saying I'm afraid of becoming *impotent!*"

"*I'm* not saying it, Jim. Your own *dreams* say it," the psychiatrist corrected him. "*You* said it *now!*"

Jim stared at him in shock. "I-impotence?! But, I . . . I'm *not* impotent! My experiences with other women *prove* it. I've *never* been impotent!"

"I believe you—" nodded the psychiatrist. "Still you *fear* impotency. That fear is what lay behind your compulsion to run to other women when your wife refused you. You had to test yourself. You had to make sure. You had to alleviate your unconscious dread. And, for a while, after each experience, your fear was allayed. But the fear always returned. It had to, because it was an unconscious anxiety. Again and again it took hold of you. Especially in regard to Beth. In fact, you were unconsciously glad of your arguments . . . your difficulties. You probably even helped greatly by *creating* them. Out of the quarrels came anger and hurt on Beth's part. And so she refused you sexually. And this gave you the excuse you were looking for . . . the way out. Now you wouldn't be called upon to *test* the potency you unconsciously feared you didn't have!"

"B-but why should I have this anxiety over becoming impotent, Doctor . . . even unconsciously?" protested Jim.

"Because," the analyst smiled, "all your life, till the time you left your mother's house, you'd felt that you were inadequate . . . unworthy . . . and undesirable."

"Did you love your mother, Jim?" the psychiatrist took another tack.

"Of course I did. Oh, there were times when I didn't *like* her . . . but I always *loved* her," Jim replied, hesitantly.

"What about those times?" the analyst prodded him.

"What about them?" Jim snapped back. "I told you! There were times when I . . . I . . ."

"Yes . . .?"

"There were times when I hated her! All right! I *admit* it." Jim's voice rose.

"Did you admit it to yourself then?" The analyst's tone was insistent.

"I . . . I couldn't," Jim cried. "You can't admit to yourself that you hate your mother. After all. She is your mother."

"You felt guilty having those feelings, then."

"I felt awful."

"And so you *buried* those awful feelings. You tried to deny to yourself that you actually *had* them. You repressed your hostility toward her."

"I blamed *myself* for her rejection, *instead!* I realize that now! It was easier to blame *myself* than blame *her!* I didn't feel *guilty* blaming myself!"

"You've made an important discovery, Jim. You've found out that you developed an anxiety . . . a fear . . . that you yourself were inadequate and undesirable in order to avoid placing the guilt where it actually belonged . . . on your mother's shoulders, not yours."

Jim sat up, staring at the floor. "And I carried that anxiety . . . that fear . . . to all women. My despair at winning my mother's affection and approval was converted into a total anxiety . . . a total fear that I couldn't please *any* woman!"

The psychiatrist nodded.

"Hence you welcomed and encouraged quarrels with Beth. She had a readiness to dominate the menage to begin with . . . a proneness to dislike and distrust men. In other words, you had the material to create, in Beth, another woman like your mother . . . a woman whom you felt you could never please, never satisfy, never be deserving of her love. In this way, you again repressed the original hostility you felt, but could never admit, toward your mother But, unconsciously, you felt *guilty!* Unconsciously, you realized that Beth was *not* your mother! You knew what Beth was *entitled* to, as a *woman* . . . as your *wife!* So you used the mechanism of the switch party to *relieve* your guilty feelings of inadequacy and impotency. You unconsciously *wanted* Beth to be satisfied by other men."

"But you loved her. And here was your conflict. Though you wanted Beth to be fulfilled in the way you felt inadequate, you didn't want to lose her love! Hence your flare-up against Alan Kent."

Jim stared at the analyst open-mouthed as the truth overwhelmed him. How clear it was now! What sense it made! Why hadn't he seen this before? Suddenly, a frightening thought struck him. "B-but she loves *Kent* now!" he stammered.

The psychiatrist shook his head.

"I doubt that very seriously, Jim. I would say, no, Beth doesn't love Alan at all. Alan Kent was only a substitute for the man she *really* loves . . . YOU!

"Her attachment for Kent was basically her attachment for the things she wants to love in you.

"People may rebel against convention, but they always remain loyal to their basic personalities. Beth tried, mistakenly, to repeat her mother's life. She wanted to be the strong, independent female dominating the weaker, unsuccessful male. You wouldn't allow this, so she turned to Alan, to that which she thought she wanted in you."

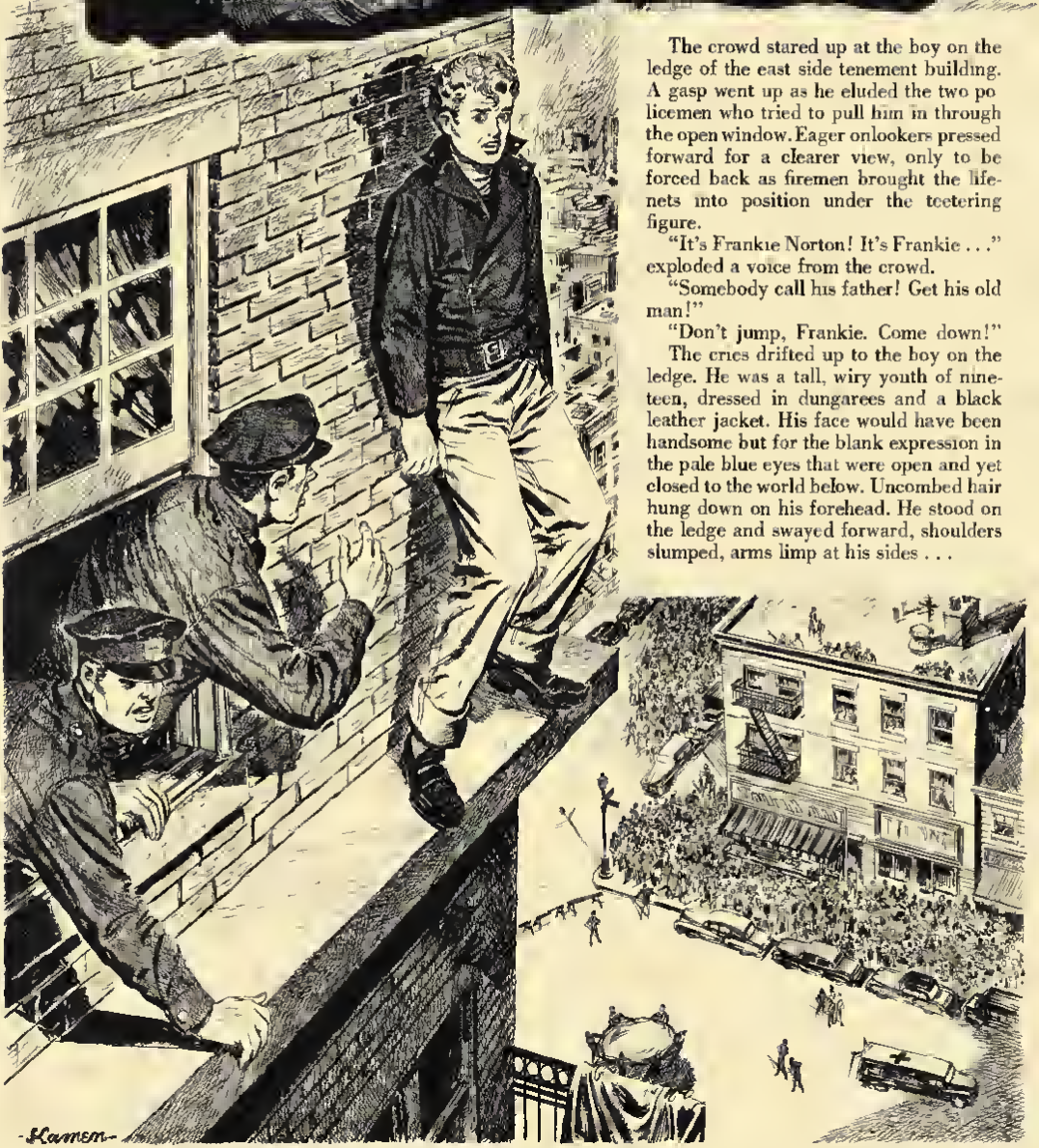
Jim studied the psychiatrist. "You speak in the *past tense*, Doctor . . . as though Beth has *changed*."

"Because I'm sure she *has*, Jim! I called her some time ago to tell her to have patience and not to do anything rash . . . that you were under analysis and that I had great hopes for success."

"She called me back the next day. She wanted to come to me, too! I sent her to a colleague of mine. Beth's been *under analysis*, Jim . . . and she wants to *see* you! Wouldn't *you* say she's changed?"

The End

The Jacket



The crowd stared up at the boy on the ledge of the east side tenement building. A gasp went up as he eluded the two policemen who tried to pull him in through the open window. Eager onlookers pressed forward for a clearer view, only to be forced back as firemen brought the life-nets into position under the teetering figure.

"It's Frankie Norton! It's Frankie . . ." exploded a voice from the crowd.

"Somebody call his father! Get his old man!"

"Don't jump, Frankie. Come down!"

The cries drifted up to the boy on the ledge. He was a tall, wiry youth of nineteen, dressed in dungarees and a black leather jacket. His face would have been handsome but for the blank expression in the pale blue eyes that were open and yet closed to the world below. Uncombed hair hung down on his forehead. He stood on the ledge and swayed forward, shoulders slumped, arms limp at his sides . . .

To Frankie Norton, the crowd below was nothing more than a quivering mass of jelly. He wondered how it would be to leap right into the midst of that tense mass of humanity waiting to see it happen. He wondered who was down there, watching him. His friends? His father? The dizziness caught him, and he closed his eyes.

Not now, he thought. *I don't want to do it now with them all watching . . . waiting to stare at my body . . . pushing over each other for a better look. Not now. Later . . . when I'm alone. Then I'll do it. So help me, God . . . I'll do it.*

He slumped back against the building. His mind was blank. He couldn't open his eyes. Everything spun around, crazily.

From behind, hands gripped him, pulled at him from the window. He fought them, swinging wildly, his eyes closed, kicking, punching, struggling against their grasp.

"Let me go," he heard himself scream. "Don't touch me!"

Then blackness closed in on him and he could remember nothing more.

They brought Frank Norton to the psychiatric ward of the City Hospital for observation. He was quiet now, but the guards flanking him were alert for any new outbursts of violence. They registered him at the desk and led him to a private room that had no doorknob on the inside, no furniture that was not bolted down, no glass or sharp instruments of any kind. His belt and shoes were taken from him and his clothes were stripped off by an orderly. In their place, he was given a sheet-like garment that matched the palor of his face. He offered no resistance and said nothing. He would let them do anything they wanted.

He was tired. He wanted to sleep. Sleep would give him strength again. He didn't even look up when the psychiatrist entered the room.

"Don't let him fool you, Doc," he heard one of the guards say.

"Looks quiet now, but he's a wild one. Nearly killed two of our boys that went up there to drag him in. Keep an eye on him."

"Prison's the only place for his kind," said the other as they left the room with the doctor.

They stood outside the open door, talking. Frank noticed that the guards kept their hands on their guns all the while, as if they expected him to burst loose again.

"Solitary . . . with bread and water," the guard was saying. "That usually takes the fight out of 'em."

"The report?" asked the doctor.

"At the front desk," nodded the guard.

"Did he say anything about why he tried to jump?"

"Naw. He clammed up as soon as they got him back off the ledge and put the cuffs on him. He's playing possum, Doc. If I were you, I'd put him in a straight jacket and . . ."

"Thank you, gentlemen," the doctor ended the conversation. "We'll take care of him from here on."

"Good luck, Doc. And you'll need it with that one." The guards started away down the hall.

The door swung closed behind them and Frank heard the bolt slide shut. He felt the doctor's eyes upon him, studying him through the wire-glass peephole in the door.

When he was gone from the door, Frank glanced around the room. He stared out of the barred windows into the teeming street below. *Why did they bring him here,* he thought. *What were they going to do?*

He didn't turn when he heard the bolt slide in the door a short while later.

"Hello, Frank."

The psychiatrist had entered the room and sat down on the edge of the bed. He studied Frank.

"You might as well get used to having me around. We'll be seeing quite a lot of each other in the next few days. I'm here to help you," he said.

Frank didn't even turn to look at him.

"I've been looking at your report," the doctor went on. Frank could feel his eyes on his back. "Your school record shows an I.Q. of 163. You've got a brilliant mind, Frank. You were an honor student up until the age of thirteen, weren't you?"

Frank turned away from the window and looked at the psychiatrist for the first time. He was young, younger than Frank had expected, with dark rimmed glasses and a finely chiseled face.

Frank stared at him for a moment and then shuffled around to the other side of the room.

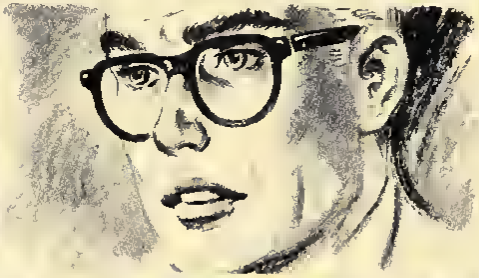
"Then," continued the doctor, "somewhere along the line, something went wrong. You went haywire."

"Your record is a series of acts of violence and theft from then on. You were picked up by the police at least fifteen times. They sent you to reform school twice." The doctor paused. "Why did you try to kill yourself, Frank?"

Frank began to move back and forth in the opposite corner of the room like a caged animal. The color mounted in his face. His hand knotted into fists. He wouldn't answer.

"Frank, listen to me," the doctor went on . . .

"You can hear me, and I know you can understand what I'm saying. I'm not a policeman, and this is not a prison. I'm a doctor . . . a psychiatrist. This is a hospital. If you let me, I can help you. Maybe you'll come to understand why you do these things."



Frank looked at him, and then put his hands to his face. There were no tears, just dry sobs and a gasping from deep inside. After a while, he stopped. Then he finally spoke.

"I . . . I'm sorry, Doc. I didn't mean to give you any trouble."

He looked at the walls, the bed, the floor . . . anything that would keep his eyes from the man who was looking at him.

"I'm just no good, I guess. Just no good. There're enough crumbs on this earth without me. I guess that's why I'm gonna kill myself," he said quietly.

"You'll have to stay here for a while, Frankie. They'll want to make some tests," said the doctor.

"You mean to see if I'm sane? I could save 'em a lot of trouble. I'm sane," he answered.

"How are things at home, Frank?" the doctor asked casually. "Trouble with your folks?"

"Probing already, Doc? You planning to psychoanalyze me?" Frankie smiled.

"No," said the psychiatrist. "Psychoanalysis is a long, deep, and expensive process. And a person has to *want* to be psychoanalyzed . . . has to *want* to be *helped* for analysis to do him any good."

During the next few days, Frank Norton underwent a battery of personality tests. He answered questions, put jig-saw puzzles together, and stared at strange ink-blots. The procedure fascinated him, and he cooperated with the psychiatrist. When he was told that he would be released from the hospital the following day, he became depressed. He'd begun to look forward to the visits with the gentle-voiced, understanding doctor who seemed to like him and was never too superior to listen to his questions and answer them honestly and candidly, no matter what subject they dealt with.

The day he was to leave the hospital, Frank sought out the psychiatrist.

"I hear you're one of the top analysts in the city," he said.

The doctor smiled. "Whoever told you that exaggerated quite a bit. There are many good men working in the field."

"You told me that psychoanalysis is expensive. How much does it cost?" Frank asked.

"That all depends," said the psychiatrist.

"I mean, how much do you charge for one of those sessions. Five bucks? Ten?"

"My usual fee is twenty dollars an hour," said the doctor. But, upon seeing Frank's crestfallen look, he added quickly, "However, I do have patients who pay as little as five and ten dollars an hour."

"Why do you ask?"

"Nothin', Doc," said Frank. "Just curious."

"Tell you what, Frank," said the doctor. "After you get out of here, come down to my office and visit me sometime. We can talk on a better basis."

"Yeah, sure," Frank had a far-away look. "Couple of things I'd like to talk to you about . . . sometime." He turned and walked away. The psychiatrist watched him move down the hospital corridor.

That afternoon, they gave Frankie his clothes . . . the dungarees, the sweatshirt, and the black leather jacket he'd been wearing when they brought him in. Then, they released him.

For nearly two hours, he wandered around the streets before going home, waiting until dark, when he knew that his father would have left for his watchman's job.

A week later, he found himself entering the offices of the psychiatrist.

The doctor was busy with a patient, and Frank had to wait. He fidgeted, paced up and back, and stared at the modern paintings on the walls.

Several times he wanted to turn and walk out of the place.

He'll never do it, Frank thought. *He'll think I'm nuts.*

He was about to leave when he saw a well-dressed woman come out of the inner office. She stared at his dungarees and black leather jacket with raised eyebrows. That did it.

The psychiatrist was seated at his desk, making some notes. When he looked up and saw Frank, a smile came over his face.

"Frank," he said, extending his hand. "How are you? What are you doing here?"

"I want to be psychoanalyzed," Frank blurted out.

The psychiatrist looked at him silently for a moment, trying to understand the meaning behind the glaring countenance.

"You want to be psychoanalyzed," he murmured.

"That's right," said Frank, firmly.

"And I can pay, too. You said you charged some patients ten bucks a session." Frank threw three ten dollar bills on the desk. "That's for three sessions in advance. Let's get started."

"Hold on a minute, Frank." The doctor stood up.

"This isn't something you can make a snap decision about. You just don't throw your money down on a counter and buy an analysis. It takes two, maybe three years . . . at several sessions a week. Let's talk about this."

"I've got the money if that's what you're worried about," snapped Frank.

"That's not it at all, Frank. I just don't know if I can help you."

". . . and I didn't steal it. This money is mine. Every cent I earned it. I've saved it ever since I was a kid. Shining shoes. Selling papers. Running errands. I . . . I used to think I'd go to college someday with it."

"And now?" the doctor asked.

"Now . . . I figure I'd better get myself fixed up before it's too late. I figure this is more important. I . . . I don't think I'll ever get to college anyway." He turned away.

"What's troubling you, Frank?"

"Are you kidding, Doc?"

"I mean, why do you suddenly want to undergo analysis?"

"Well . . . It's like you said . . . at the hospital . . . that first day. Until I was about twelve . . . thirteen years old, I was different. All of a sudden, I changed . . ." Frank stared at the floor.

"And you don't like yourself the way you are now?"

"I didn't say that! Don't go putting words in my mouth!"

"Frank," said the doctor, "You've got to understand one thing. Here in this room, there are no lies . . . no pretense . . . no pride."

"If there are, you're wasting your money, your time, and you'd be fooling yourself. It's not the analyst who gives you an understanding of your actions. If it comes out at all, it's because you do it yourself, by talking out the truth. Things you've been afraid to see. Afraid to face. Eventually, after a time, you become strong enough to see the connections. Do you understand that?"

Frank's face grew red. He was about to make a sharp retort, but he held himself back. Then he smiled. "I got you, Doc. I see it's gonna be hard. You'll have to be patient with me."

"You'll learn, Frank, that I'm the most patient man in the world," the analyst said.

"Then you'll do it?" Frank looked hopeful.

"Yes. The fee will be five dollars a week. We'll have three evening sessions . . . Monday, Wednesday . . ."

"No!" Frank rose to his feet. "I don't want your charity. I'll pay the regular fees."

"Those *are* the regular fees. I'm the one who decides. No one else. It's not charity."

"After all," he added. "We don't even know yet if this is going to do you any good. This will be only a trial analysis. You wouldn't want to be cheated either, would you?"

"I . . . guess not," Frank grinned. "When do we start?"

"Tomorrow . . . at seven. Be on time."

"Don't worry. I will."

Contrary to Frank's expectations, it took him a long time to learn how to talk freely. It was strange to come and lie down on the couch with the analyst out of sight and say things to someone he couldn't see.

For many sessions, there was just talk. About his father, Tim Norton, who was a night watchman down at the railroad yards, although he was still a man of heavy brawn. Tim had wanted his son to be an athlete and a he-man. Frank recalled the many fights between his mother, who understood her son, and his father. Tim Norton was a heavy drinker and a brutal man. Frank's mother had been the shield between father and son. Then, his mother had died.

After the funeral, Frank had been afraid to come home. He'd stayed with an aunt until his father had come and dragged him back because a truant officer had made him miss a day's work by calling him up to school. Frank had been an honor student till then.

"He didn't care about me," said Frank, one evening. "It wasn't my missing classes that bad bothered him. He just didn't want any trouble with the authorities. Otherwise, he'd have had me out of school and working for his booze . . ."

The period after his mother's death was the worst Frank had ever gone through. He'd tried to please his father in every way, but nothing helped. Then he recalled how, one day, he'd gotten into a fight with two older boys who often picked on him after school. They'd wanted to take his books away from him. Knowing what his father would say, he'd fought off the boys with all the terror of facing his old man.

Many weeks were required for Frank to be able to get out the whole story of his family life. It was unpleasant for him to talk about it. Drunk or sober, Tim had never let a day go by without some kind of dig . . . some nasty crack at his son:

"Why don't you ever go out with girls?"

"Don't you like girls?"

"Who'd ever have thought that Tim Norton's boy would turn out to be a sissy book-worm?"

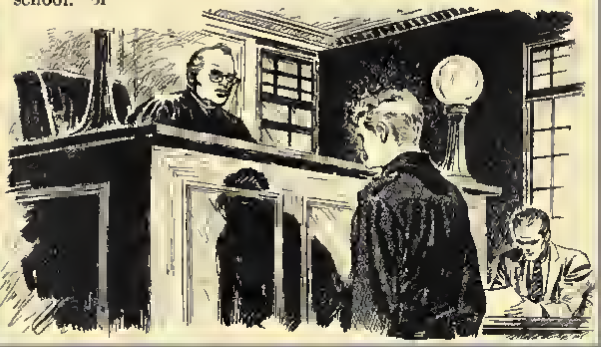
He'd punched and swung his fists as he'd never done before, and both his attackers had been sent off bloody and beaten.

For the first time in his life, his father had seemed proud of him. He'd smiled and said, "I didn't think you had it in you. Maybe you'll be a man yet."

From that time on, Frank had tried to live up to his father's words. He'd started to hang out with a gang called the "Killers." He'd smoked and cursed and swaggered.

His brains had made him the natural leader of the gang. When a problem arose about getting enough money to buy black leather jackets, Frank worked out a scheme of robbing five-and-dime stores.

The gang then sold the tools, pens, and knives they were able to steal. Frank began to carry a switchblade knife he'd stolen in his pocket. But bad luck seemed to follow him. Time and again, he was caught. Finally, they sent him away to reform school.



As weeks of analysis turned into months, and the sessions began to go deeper and deeper, Frank found himself more and more disturbed while talking about himself. What had started as a torrent of information, history, explanation became an agonizing search for things to say. It upset him when he lay on the couch with a blank wall of silence between him and the analyst.

When Frank finally did speak, it was about things that happened to him during that day or the day before. He'd talk about these events until he'd exhausted them and then he'd fall into silence again. When there was nothing more to tell, he'd writhe and sweat and beat his fists against the couch cushion.

"What's the matter?" he snapped, four months after the analysis had begun. "I spend my good dough. I come here, and nothing happens. What kind of racket is this, anyway? Don't you do anything? I'm getting sick and tired of this whole rotten mess. This isn't helping me."

"Getting sick and tired," said the analyst, "is just one part of this 'rotten mess' as you call it. It's part of the analysis. Go on . . . tell me more."

"I've got nothing more to talk about. I tell you everything I can, but it doesn't go anywhere," said Frank, annoyed.

"That's the trouble, Frank. In this case, *too much* talking is a cover-up. You talk about things that aren't important to you in order to skirt the real issues. We've got a big block to get out of the way, I'm afraid."

"Sorry, Doc. Lately, I get so sore at you for just sitting there. I get the feeling you're laughing at me like you know something I don't know. It makes me so mad I want to take a poke at you."

"Why didn't you tell me *that?*" asked the doctor

"Because . . . well, how could I? I'd feel terrible. I'm ashamed of myself, and I try to think of things to talk to you about so you won't think I'm fighting you. I'm sorry, Doc. I'm just a bum. This is a waste of time for me." Frank fell silent.

"We'll see," said the analyst.

During the fifth month of his analysis, Frank missed two sessions. He'd fallen down a flight of stairs at home and wrenched his shoulder. When he came back to the office, he was unable to look the analyst in the face. He went directly to the couch, lay down and closed his eyes.

"I don't understand what's happening to me," he shook his head sadly.

"Tell me about it," the analyst urged.

"I don't know. I don't understand. I've become so self-conscious lately. About my body. I'm all mixed up. Everything I do lately, I ask myself . . . 'Why are you doing this? . . . What makes you do it?' I catch myself thinking about the way my father used to call me 'sissy'. I've become self-conscious about other guys. In the movies, or in the subways, whenever I go to the washrooms where other men are, I find myself looking at the wall, the floor. I get scared they'll think I'm looking at *them*. Then, I think . . . 'Do I want to look at them?' I start to sweat. I get scared someone will put his hand on my shoulder and say . . . 'What are you looking at, bud? Get out of here, you . . . you fag!' "

Frank twisted around. "Everything makes me scared lately. I walk around and my hands are trembling. I get to thinking that what my old man says is true. I get to wondering . . ."

Frank sat up. "What the heck am I saying?" He jumped to his feet. "What the heck am I doing here anyway? I don't belong here. There's nothing wrong with me. What the heck am I wasting my time here for?"

His face was red and he was clenching and unclenching his fists. "You always want me to tell you how I feel about you, don't you. All right. I'll tell you. I don't like you. I hate your guts. I feel like pushing your face in. So help me, God, I feel like it."

"Sometimes I think you guys are fags yourselves, trying to turn me into one. Oh, yeah . . . I know how you can take a normal guy and make him into one of your own. I've read plenty of books about guys like you. Dirty little fags who go around fooling with young boys . . ."

"Go on, Frank," the analyst urged.

"Just because a guy's big and hairy doesn't mean anything. Lots of fags look like big he-men. I know . . ." His voice trailed off.

"How, Frank? How do you know?"

Frank stared at the psychiatrist. His fists opened and his lips trembled. "I'm getting out of here," he said.

"What came to your mind, Frank? Don't hold it back! We're breaking through. Don't fight it. Talk!"

"What the heck are you trying to make me say? I'm getting out of here!" He snatched his jacket off the chair, overturning it, and stormed out of the room

He slammed the door to the outer office, stamped down the long hallway, thundered down the stairs, and kicked open the door that led to the street. He pushed forward, angrily shouldering people aside as they passed him and turned to stare.

"Drop dead," he shouted at a protesting man.

A horn blared and the screech of brakes broke his thoughts as he crossed the street. He leaped back and the motorist shouted at him. Frank shouted back. "Drop dead, all of you." He picked up a rock and hurled it at the departing car.

For days after that, he didn't go out of the house. He stayed in bed and brooded about himself. Then came the night his father came home drunk. And the fight started.

It was the same old thing as before. Why didn't Frank get a job? Why didn't he live someplace else?

They shouted at each other for awhile and then his father hit him. Frank reeled back against the wall, rolled against the kitchen sink. He put his hand into his pocket and his fingers curled around the switchblade knife. His father staggered out of the room as if nothing had happened and lay down on the couch.

Frank took out the knife and flicked it open. He stared at the reflection of the naked kitchen bulb in the long gleaming blade.

Then, he closed the knife and put it back in his pocket, put on his black leather jacket, and left the house.

He wandered along the street near the park, his heart beating wildly. He was angry, unable to sort out his racing thoughts. He knew only how much he hated his father.

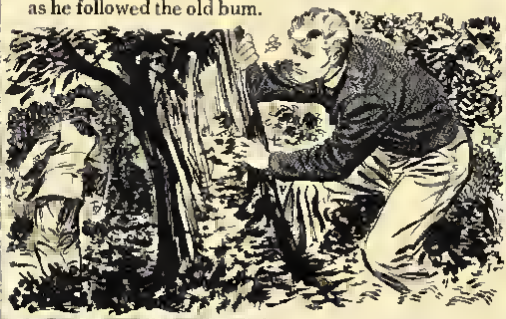
If only the old man had died instead of his mother, things would be different. Thinking of his father, he felt anger and guilt and fear all rolled up into one. And then he saw the old bum up ahead.

The street was dark and deserted and the old man lurched along, staggering and swaying. He was drunk. *A bum . . . like my father*, Frank thought. His hand closed on the knife in his pocket and it felt cold to his touch. He closed his eyes as he walked, afraid to think.

And then came the picture of his drunken father slapping and slapping his mother's face until she cried. He saw himself, standing helpless in the corner, afraid of the old man.

When he opened his eyes, the bum had turned into the park. Frank's legs carried him in the same direction. He felt as if he had no control over himself. As though he were watching all this from outside, as another person.

He walked on the grass, quietly, out of sight. A headache pounded his brain, and each step was a throbbing pain. He thought of his father. He thought of the analyst. And he clenched the knife in his hand as he followed the old bum.



How he hated that worthless old bum . . . that good-for-nothing old bum who went around drinking and making trouble and playing with boys!

The old man stopped and looked around, like a frightened animal that senses when he is being stalked. Frank watched him sink onto a bench and pull out a pint bottle and take a drink.

"Drunk," muttered Frank. under his breath. "Dirty drunken fag . . ."

His mind was a blank. He moved in a stupor. Hatred born of fear . . . violence born of terror pushed him forward . . . behind the old bum on the bench slopping his booze. He pressed the button and the switchblade whipped outward. Close enough to touch the old bum now. Close enough to . . .

A woman's scream cut the night to shreds. The blast of a police whistle answered the scream.

Frank stared at the knife in his hand, at the old man's face, at the blood that covered everything.

Why was he standing there, waiting to be caught? He had to get away. He had to go to the analyst . . . to talk to him.

He had to tell the analyst of the strange thing that had just happened. He had to escape.

Dropping the knife, he overcame the paralysis in his legs and fled like a startled cat . . . deep into the park . . .

He heard the wail of sirens, but he kept to the shadows. Doubling back along the lakeside, he stopped to wash himself off and dry himself with newspapers.

He moved west, through the park, climbed over the wall and dropped into the street. He had escaped. He looked at his watch. It was after the hour set for his regular session. He hurried along, upset because he would be late.

The psychiatrist opened the door and let him in. He walked straight to the couch and lay down without saying a word. He covered his eyes with his hands and sobbed. Then, he began . . . in a low voice . . .

He described the events of the evening, starting with his father coming home drunk. When he came to the part about the old man in the park, his voice rose hysterically and he had to stop and calm himself.

"Now I see," he said, when he'd finished, "it was my father I wanted to kill. Ever since my mother died, I've wanted to kill him. I've felt guilty thinking about it. Now, it's as if I've really done it."

"Did it occur to you," asked the analyst, "that when you felt that violent rage toward me the other day, it was because you identified me with your father?"

Frank stared at him. "You? No. I didn't think of it. But now I see. That's why I got so upset and ran out of here that way. I see it now."

"Then you see now why you hate your father so," said the analyst.

"Because . . . because of what he did to my mother," hesitated Frank.

"Partly," the psychiatrist nodded. "But what about the deeper reason?"

"Deeper reason?" Frank frowned. "That's all there is to it. I don't understand."

"Think, Frank. What did you say to me that time? Do you remember?"

"I'm tired," Frank sat up, "and besides, we don't have any more time."

The analyst stood up. "I'm going to do something I've never done before," he said. "I'm going to cancel all my other appointments for tonight. There's a great deal to clear up before you leave. We'll try to work it out. I don't care if it takes until morning."

The analyst went into the other room, and made several calls. Frank heard through the half-open door as he explained to his other patients that something important had come up. When he came back into the room, he had a hypodermic needle and a small vial in his hand.

"To speed things up, I'm going to give you a hypnotic drug, Frank. It will help break down the barriers and let you speak more freely. It's Sodium Pentathol. Now, start counting backwards from one hundred. And try to relax . . ."

"One hundred . . . ninety-nine . . . ninety-eight . . . ninety-seven . . ." Frank droned on. As he counted, pictures formed . . . broke . . . and dissolved into new forms. Numbers became difficult to recall, and he began to mix them up. Then he sighed. He heard the analyst's questions about his childhood. He began to answer them.

Frank had always known that his father had resented him because he was so thin and bookish. But not until now did Frank recall the very strange and awful memory of his father that stirred and then came welling up out of his deep past . . .

He'd gone to a movie at a local theater. He'd seen his father come in drunk that afternoon and sit down several rows in front of him, next to another boy. He saw the boy push his father away and get up and change his seat. Then, he'd seen his father move to another boy, and the same thing happened. This time a man came over and punched his father in the face. There was shouting. A woman hit him with her purse. His father stumbled out, protesting, drunk, slobbering, between two policemen. Frank had cowered there in his seat, frightened, ashamed, disgusted. They'd called his father a filthy, drunken bum. A molesting fag.

Frank had said nothing when his father had lied to his mother about getting into a fight with someone who tried to steal his wallet. He'd remained silent, but he'd hated his father for what he'd seen . . . for what he'd always remember.

Only somewhere along the way, the memory had been pushed back out of his conscious mind.

"Because you *wanted* to forget it," the analyst said. "It was a painful memory. Go on . . ."

The memories came up, and with their recall came the emotions that had accompanied them. The fight, that day after school. Frank's consequent delinquent behavior. Joining that gang. The leather jackets. He'd wanted to prove that he wasn't what his father was. He'd wanted to prove that he was a man.

The stealing, the fighting, the acts of violence had followed. But in almost every case, he'd been caught and punished. Because he'd wanted to get caught. He'd tripped himself up in every act, without consciously realizing it. He'd actually set out to destroy himself.

The memories came through and Frank talked and answered the analyst's questions. The night crept by and the dawn streaked the sky. When he finally got up from the couch, he was exhausted and bathed in perspiration. He turned to face the doctor.

"So that was it," he said softly.

"That was it," nodded the psychiatrist. "You hated your father for what you knew about him, and yet you felt guilty in that hate. Your guilt feelings were too much for you. It created an anxiety in you. An anxiety that you were like him. It is a common thing for a boy to identify himself with his father, but your identification with your father was frightening to you. When you began to feel that you were him . . . that you'd changed places with him, and began to believe all of his insinuations, you turned that hate back in upon yourself You wanted to destroy yourself, and thereby destroy him."

"That's why you stood on that ledge and tried to jump. You wanted to destroy your father," the analyst said

"And when I couldn't destroy myself or my father, I went out and killed some poor defenseless old coot whom I associated with my father." Frank hung his head. "And now there's no way out of the trap I've caught myself in."

Frank stood silent, contemplating the meaning of the things he'd learned this night.

"What do you plan to do now?" asked the doctor.

"Can I use your phone?"

The psychiatrist nodded, and Frank picked up the phone.

"Operator," he said. "Give me the police."

When the connection was made, Frank gave his name and told them what he'd done and said he'd be down to the station to give himself up.

"You could plead temporary insanity," said the analyst, when Frank had hung up. "If my testimony in court will help, I'd be glad to . . ."

"No, Doc, that isn't the way," Frank whispered.

"Maybe, at the moment, I didn't know what I was doing. But before . . . all the times I *did* it to my old man in my *mind*, I was just as guilty. I set out to destroy him, and I succeeded. Let's let it go at that."

"I'm sorry I couldn't help you in time, Frank," said the analyst, sincerely. "I was sure that, in time, you'd accomplish the same thing here, on that couch, emotionally. That there would be no need . . ."

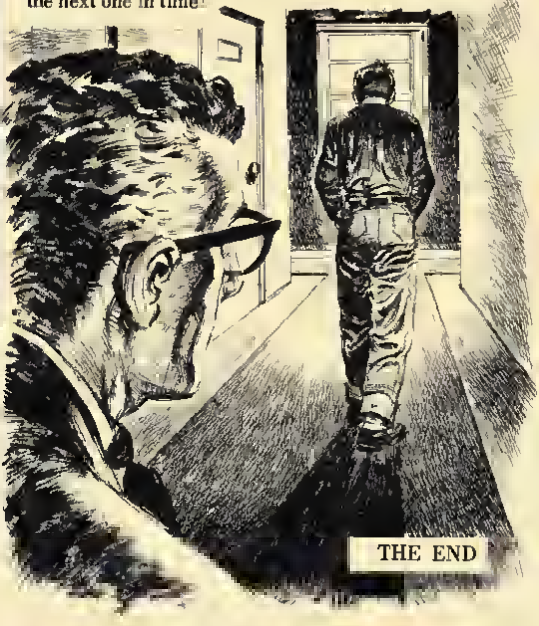
"That's okay, Doc," Frank smiled slightly. "At least now I'll know why. It'll make it easier, knowing why." He turned to go.

"You forgot your jacket, Frank," the analyst reminded him.

"I don't want it any more, Doc," said Frank. "I don't need it any more. Keep it for me, will you? As a remembrance. It's got my name inside . . ."

He turned and left the office. The analyst watched him walk down the long dark corridor into the dawn light beyond. He shook his head.

"The next one," he said softly. "Maybe we'll get the next one in time!"



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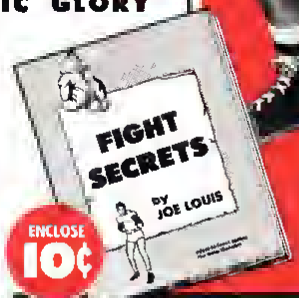

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